

# House Adopts Nadler Resolution Honoring Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Tuesday, 15 July 2008

WASHINGTON,

D.C. — Congressman Jerrold Nadler

(NY-08) today welcomed the House adoption of H. Res.1088, a resolution he

authored recognizing and commending the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for

50 years of service as a vital American cultural ambassador to the world. The resolution was adopted on a voice vote.

“I am proud that Alvin Ailey calls my Congressional district

in New York City

home,” said Rep. Nadler. “Ailey is a

cultural treasure not just to the City, but to the entire world. Not only is this one of the world’s premier

modern dance companies, but they have done so much to break cultural barriers

through the arts. I applaud them on

their 50th anniversary and look forward to 50 more years of their contributions

to the world of dance.”

A similar resolution has also been introduced in the Senate

by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. That

bill, S. Res. 490, is co-sponsored by Senator Charles Schumer.

“The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has distinguished

itself as one of the world’s premier dance companies and is one of New York’s great

artistic treasures. The company’s

members have brought their work into communities across the United States

and have served as vital cultural ambassadors around the world. It is fitting that we recognize this

remarkable group for their unparalleled accomplishments. I congratulate Alvin Ailey American Dance

Theater on reaching this landmark, and I wish them continued success in the

years ahead,” said Senator Clinton.

Rep. Nadler’s full remarks on his resolution follow:

“Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise in support of this resolution honoring the Alvin Ailey American

Dance Theater, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. I would like to thank

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and the rest of my colleagues on the

Education and Labor Committee for bringing this resolution to the floor.

“Founded in 1958, Ailey has become widely recognized as one

of the world’s premier modern dance companies.

In its 50-year history, Ailey has performed for an estimated 21,000,000

people in 71 countries on six continents.

The troupe’s signature work, “Revelations,” has been seen by more people

across the globe than any other work of dance.

“Alvin Ailey was born into an impoverished childhood in the

small, segregated town of Rogers, Texas. Dedicated to promoting the uniqueness of the

African-American cultural experience, Ailey began offering opportunities to

black dancers when there were few.

“Revelations,” which draws upon the influences of black spirituals,

gospel music, and blues, epitomizes the universality of art that Ailey sought to

explore. Of this groundbreaking work, he said: "Its roots are in American Negro culture, which is part of the whole country's heritage. The dance speaks to everyone."

"By 1963, the troupe had begun welcoming dancers of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds, and translating their experiences into some of the most riveting works of dance of the 20th century. The company now performs works by a wide range of choreographers, both emerging and established, from across the globe, totaling more than 200 works by over 70 choreographers.

"In 1982, Alvin Ailey received the United Nations Peace Medal, and in 2001, President George W. Bush recognized the Ailey and Artistic Director Judith Jamison with the National Medal of Arts, making the Ailey the first dance company to be honored with this award.

"Ailey continues to make a lasting impact in the dance world through its Arts in Education and Community Programs, which provide more than 100,000 young people from diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds the opportunity to explore their creative potential, not only in New York, but in cities throughout the United States. Ailey II, the junior company, reaches more than 69,000 people each year, and brings its inspiring performances to smaller communities across North America.

"I am proud that Ailey calls my Congressional district in New York City home, and has made the JoanWeillCenter for Dance the largest facility dedicated exclusively to dance in the United States. I wish to thank Ailey for all it has done to break cultural barriers through the arts. I especially want to thank Judith Jamison, Artistic Director, and Sharon Gersten Luckman, Executive Director, who keep Alvin Ailey's artistic and social vision alive today.

"I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution congratulating the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for its 50 years as a cultural ambassador to the world, and thanking them for their outstanding service to future generations of artists."